

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MELBOU 01864 140306Z

12

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3065

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MELBOURNE 1864

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: LEADING YOUNG BUSINESSMAN'S VIEW ON ELECTORAL
IMPACT

1. I HAD ROD CARNEGIE, 42 YEAR OLD HEAD OF
CONZINC RIOTINTO OF AUSTRALIA (CRA) TO LUNCH TODAY AND WE
DISCUSSED THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS AND THE IMPENDING
GENERAL ELECTION. HE WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT IMPACT OF
THE ELECTIONS OR THE OUTLOOK FOR THE LONG RANGE POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA, SINCE HE FELT THAT DEFEAT OF THE
WHITLAM GOVERNMENT IN THESE UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD EMBITTER
ALP LEADERS AND ARREST THE PROCESS OF MATURATION IN THE ALP
WHICH WHITLAM HAD INSTITUTED DURING THE LAST YEAR, AS
EVIDENCED BY HIS APPOINTMENT OF REALISTIC, SENSIBLE MODERATES
LIKE HAYDEN, JAMES MCCLELLAND AND WRIEDT TO REPLACE
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PAGE 02 MELBOU 01864 140306Z

DOCTRINAIVED DEMAGODVES LIKE CAIRNS, CAMERON AND CONNOR.

2. CARNEGIE ARGUED AT LENGTH THAT DESPITE WHITLAM'S ARROGANT PERSONALITY AND SLOPPY MANAGEMENT OF HIS GOVERNMENT HE HAD DURING THE LAST YEAR USED HIS LEADERSHIP TO CHANGE THE ALP FROM ITS HISTORIC ATTITUDE OF THEORETICAL UNREALITY AND HAD BEGUN A PROCESS OF RESHAPING THE PARTY INTO A CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONSERVATIVE COALITION WHICH HAS FOR SO LONG DOMINATED AUSTRALIAN POLITICS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INSISTENT THAT ONLY A REFORMED ALP COULD BRING THE GREAT BULK OF AUSTRALIANS UNDER 35 INTO ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTHY DEMOCRACY. HE FELT THAT IN THE EVENT OF A FRASER-LED LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY (LCP) WIN ON THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ALP WOULD REVERT TO ITS HISTORIC DOCTRINE, EXTREMIST IDEAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WHITLAM WERE TO WIN ON DECEMBER 13 HIS PRESTIGE WOULD BE GREATLY REINFORCED WITHIN THE PARTY SO THAT HE COULD CONTINUE THE CREATION OF A VIBLE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONSERVATIVES

3. COMMENT: IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT CARNEGIE COLLABORATED CLOSELY WITH FRASER IN WORKING OUT THE LCP REPLY TO THE HAYDEN BUDGET OF LATE AUGUST. AS SOMETHING OF A "WHIZ KIND" WHO, AFTER EDUCATION AND PRIVATE BUSINESS EXPERIENCE IN BRITAIN AND THE USA HAS ROCKETED TO THE TOP OF AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS AT A YOUNG AGE (ALBEIT FROM A VERY SECURE LAUNCHING PAD IN ONE OF MELBOURNE'S FIRST FAMILIES"), HIS OBSERVATIONS ARE WORTH PONDERING. END COMMENT.

4. INCIDENTALLY, CARNEGIE WAS MOST UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW THE VOTING WOULD ACTUALLY TURN OUT. HE FELT HOWEVER THE EXTREMIST AGITATION BY THE FAR LEFT WOULD FRAGMENT VOTERS AND ASSURE THE LCP VICTORY WHICH HE PERSONALLY FEARS

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